Lancaster Farming, Saturday, June 10, 1967-19

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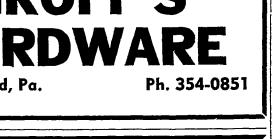
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Water Bags Make Good Mulch, Researcher Says

Plastic bags filled with wa-spectively. 28,000 pounds. 24.- the same clear polyethylene. ter and placed on the soil as a 000 pounds. and 16,000 pounds Golden Beauty sweet corn and mulch improved vegetable per acre from the three treat- Garden Green bush beans were yields by 20 percent on an ex- ments. Bean yields were 17, used in the experiment perimental plot in Idaho. the 000 pounds, 14,000, and 9,000 pounds of nitrogen per U.S. Department of Agricul- pounds per acre. ture reports.

The water mulch cut down mulch were best demonstrated on variations in soil tempera- during an unseasonable cold ture, absorbing some of the snap, Bowers said. One Sepheat from the sun at midday tember day during the experiand reducing heat loss from ment, snow fell and air tem- gardeners to plant early in the the soil at night. Most vege-perature dropped from the spring with less risk of frost tables grow best within a fair- mid-40's to 24 degrees F. Mini- damage, and should be espely narrow range of soil tem- mum soil surface temperatures cially useful in regions where peratures, notes Sidney A. Bow- were 32 degrees F. on the un-temperature varies sharply dur-ers, soil scientist with USDA's mulched plots, 36 degrees F. ing the growing season, scien-Agricultural Research Service, on the plots mulched with plas- tist believe. who conducted the research. tic strips, and 40.7 degrees F. The Idaho Agricultural Expense on the water mulched plots. ment Station cooperated.

Bowers first tested his water mulch theory on uncropped soil. He found that the water the tops of the water bags- his high school's commencebags reduced maximum tem-perature and increased mini- ground Two weeks after the outcronding arguing arguing mum temperature in the halfinch of the upper soil's surface At a depth of 4 inches, the bags raised both maximum and minimum temperatures.

mulching idea on two heat- lene, cut 12 feet long and two work experience program this sensitive crops: sweet corn and feet wide to fit between the year was spent in the employ string beans. He planted 12 rows on his 12 by 12-foot test of a local farm machinery dealplots of each vegetable, four plots. The bags were filled with er. mulched with water bags, four enough water to swell them to

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Proper Egg Size.

Balanced

Performance

The advantages of water

Bean plants on the unmulched and plastic-mulched plots froze down to the soil line: watermulched beans froze only to home farm. He was cited at ground. Two weeks after the outstanding graduating agriculfreeze, fresh beans were har- ture senior, receiving the Elizvested from the water mulch- abethtown Farm Women's ed plot.

with plain strips of plastic, and a thickness of about four in- of these boys on their out-four without mulch. Average ches. The plastic-mulched plots standing efforts during their four without mulch. Average ches. The plastic-mulched plots yields for sweet corn were, re- were covered with strips of

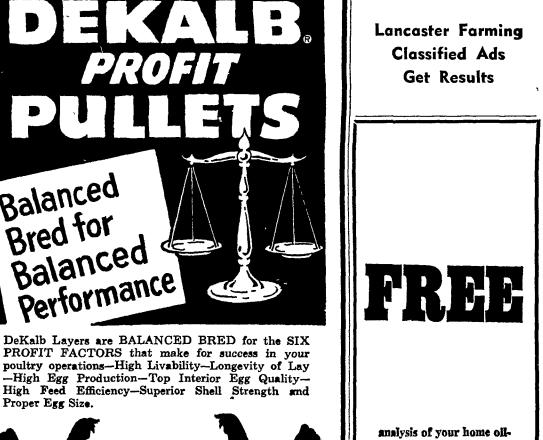
was disked into each plot p to planting. Thermocouples were buried at varying depths in the plots to record soil temperature.

Water mulches would allow

Outstanding Seniors (Continued from Page 18)

award. He has served his FFA Bowers used plastic bags chapter as corresponding secretary. Although Clayton's main Bowers then tried the new made of 6-mil clear polyethy- farming interest is dairy, his

> Our congratulations to all agricultural schooling. Collegebound, or farm-bound --- good luck'





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